Junior Leader Innovation Symposium

After Action Report

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Context and Desired Outcome

Context

- NWDC hosted the Junior Leader Innovation Symposium (JLIS) on 06 June

Desired Outcome

- Present results and observations
- Propose follow on actions

Agenda

- Symposium Objectives
- Highlights
- Accomplishments
- Key Observations
- Actions / Way Ahead
- Recommendations

Symposium Objectives

1. Boost awareness & educate Junior Leaders (JL) on importance of innovation
2. Deputize JLs to contribute new ideas
3. Explore new ways to organize, connect, and proliferate open discussion venues
4. Harvest recommendations on key issues
5. Employ the creative energy of JLs to tackle emerging challenges

Gather Feedback on Draft Innovator's Guide

Highlights

- 230 in-person attendees and 218 DCO nodes
- Over 100 organizations were represented from CONUS, to Japan, to Bahrain
- Speakers: COMSUBFOR, ONR, NPS, junior officer authors/bloggers, Sailors of the Year
- JL Panel debated issues & provided recommendations
- JLs were energetic and engaged
  - Over 150 pages (2900 entries) of DCO chat

Accomplishments

- Gained momentum for innovation campaign & consolidated role as Navy Center for Innovation
- Gathered JL concerns & recommendations
- Matured use of online tools, e.g., DCO, Facebook, blogs, networking, social media
- Generated a post-event spike of innovation discussions across blogosphere
  - USNI Blog, Disruptive Thinkers, CDR Salamander, Small Wars Journal, NextWar, Navy Live, Sailor Bob, Navy Facebook, Navy

Met all JL Innovation Symposium objectives

Observation 1: Obstacles to Innovation

- Navy culture does not embrace JL ideas
  - JLs view chain of command as not responsive
  - JLs uninformed of ways to propose and develop ideas
  - Getting an idea adopted requires working outside the system
- JLs need a senior advocate to get an idea adopted
  - Perseverance: Its not enough to generate new ideas, implementation is key ("iceberg" analogy – 10% idea, 90% moving it forward)

JLs want to contribute, but are skeptical that anyone is listening

Observation 2: Embrace the Millennial Generation

- Navy culture must embrace the unique traits/habits/strengths of the new generation
  - Use/reliance on social media
  - Consumers of large volumes of bite-size information
  - Demand rapid responses to topics of interest
- JLs want technology to make their lives easier, but Navy's technology is making it harder
  - Systems are not intuitive/tools are not mainstream

Junior leaders are frustrated with excess/redundant online programs

- e-stop shopping" for information

Observation 3: Is Warfighting the Priority?

- Tactics development for JLs is largely dead
  - Focus is on certification & “checking the box,” not experimentation & innovation
  - JLs want to be warrior professionals, not admin SMEs
  - Tactical innovation is perceived as troublesome
  - JLs need online forums for classified discussions
- Dissatisfaction with personnel system
  - Enlisted Boards & PTS are not retaining best Sailors
  - Reliance on Computer-Based Training & PQS

Improving warfighting tactics should not be smothered by admin requirements

Actions and Way Ahead

- Deliver AAR to CUSFF/CPF and post
- Publish and distribute Innovator's Guide
- Partner with training and education commands to elevate awareness of innovation in classrooms (see backup slides)
- Expand use of Navy Center for Innovation website
  - Harvest ideas and provide prompt feedback to submitters
  - Develop a classified discussion capability
- Expand and drive a network of innovators
  - Continuously engage past participants with topics/debate
- Plan follow-on events
  - Host Pacific Rim Innovation Symposium (early Fall 2012)
  - Senior Leader Innovation Symposium (late Fall 2012)
  - Crowd-sourcing event(s) ICW ONR via DCO
  - Continue Innovation Speaker Series (local and via DCO)
- Implement Midshipman internship program at NWDC

Recommendations

- Demonstrate resolve to remove obstacles
  - P4 to Commanders to lead/inspire discussion on tactical creativity
  - Condense or remove unnecessary ancillary admin/training
  - Eliminate/replace obsolete software tools
  - Expand strategic comms campaign on innovation through publications, blogs, and speeches by senior leaders
- Energize broad, top-down advocacy for innovation
  - Conduct innovation outreach events directly with the Fleet
  - Formally instill innovation into training and educational classrooms across the career spectrum
- Leverage private sector technology and processes
  - Build relationship with industry leaders, invite to future Innovation events

Backup Slides

Symposium Agenda

1000 – 1030	Opening remarks, RADM Kraft, Commander, NWDC
1030 – 1130	Keynote Address, VADM Richardson, Commander, SUBFOR
1130 – 1145	Break
1145 – 1230	Innovation from the Civilian Sector Perspective, Dr. Fall, ONR
1230 – 1330	History of Junior Innovation, LCDR Armstrong / U.S. Naval Institute J.O. Outreach, LT McFall
1330 – 1415	Lunch
1415 – 1515	A Quick Guide to Innovation for Leaders, Dr. Denning, NPS (via DCO)
1515 – 1530	Break
1530 – 1600	Innovation in Social Media: Disruptive Innovation, LT Kohlmann
1600 – 1730	Panel: Innovative Solutions to Navy Challenges, Prof. Culora, LCDR Armstrong, LT Kohlmann, SHC Zamora, PS1 Maher
1730 – 1800	Closing Remarks and Way Ahead, RADM Kraft

Revised: 05 June 2012

Working group questions

1. How can the Navy better capture and act on innovative ideas? Consider incentives, education, organizational climate, and culture.
2. How should unmanned systems be employed 5 years from now?
3. What are the key operational questions the Navy needs to answer in the next 5-10 years? What resources does the Navy need to answer these questions?

Junior Leader Panel Recommendations

- Improving Innovation
  - Conduct training on how to get ideas heard
  - Quicker response to ideas needed
  - Shift culture at senior level to welcome innovation
  - Innovate with existing platforms vice buying new technologies
- Use of Unmanned Systems
  - Draw lessons from other Services
  - Use UAVs for high risk transits
  - Develop tactical applications & training
- Key Operational Issues for the Navy
  - Reassess training/Exorcise zero defects mentality
  - Streamline procurement
  - How do we insert techs and operators into design and development?
  - Future fuels
  - Data/info management: use of technology to store, transport & update information (system maintenance pubs, doctrine, maps, etc)

Digital Seabag Contents

- JLIS participants recommended the following be included in the “digital seabag”
  - Sacred texts and great literature (via eBooks/audio books/bookmarks/favorites)
  - Professional/rate training sources
  - Selected family photos
  - A journal/planner/calendar
  - Commonly used forms in the course of work
  - Motivating PT music and videos
  - Language modules for cultural preparation of current mission, next mission, or for personal development
  - A webcam/equipment to video chat with family on port calls.
  - Tactical and operational content such as maps, navigation aids & system maintenance information

Partnering with Navy Schools

- NWDC AO (LCDR Phillips) met with 8 schoolhouse COs in Newport to discuss ways to reinvigorate a culture of innovation within classrooms
- Gathered information on opportunities to instill innovation into curriculums
- Scoped the demand signal for depth and breadth of innovation into particular rank levels of training
- Assessed the variety and length of forums to utilize (online, short course (<1 day), one week course, etc)

Partnering with Navy Schools (cont)

- Commands at NAVSTA Newport including:
  - Naval Academy Preparatory School (NAPS)
  - NOSC Newport
  - Command Leadership School
  - Surface Warfare Officer School
  - Officer Training Command Newport (OTCN)
  - Naval War College (NWC)
  - Senior Enlisted Academy

Partnering with Navy Schools: Key Findings

1. Most COs were intensely interested in NWDC's efforts to reinvigorate a culture of innovation within the Navy and are willing to help do so
2. All COs felt education and training commands are fertile ground to introduce junior leaders to methods and processes of innovation
3. All discussed the challenge of introducing new material into extremely tight curricula over which they do not have a great deal of control
4. Two conversations addressed the importance of RADM Kraft meeting with RADM Quinn, Chief of Naval Education and Training, to discuss ways to promote a culture of innovation as part of Naval Education and Training. Doing so could allow the work of NWDC to reach thousands of junior officers and sailors every year.

Partnering with Navy Schools: Recommendations

1. Send COs in Newport electronic copy of the Innovator's Guide and maintain engagement with Newport education and training commands
2. Follow-up with Naval War College, Naval Academy Prep School, and Surface Warfare Officer School, three commands which seem to have the most potential for near-time action
3. Set up a phone conversation and/or face to face meeting between RADM Kraft and RADM (ret) Kelly to align the work of NWC's whole person leadership concepts with NWDC's work to reinvigorate a culture of innovation within the Navy
4. RADM Kraft and RADM (ret) Kelly should jointly meet with RADM Quinn to discuss ways to incorporate NWC and NWDC work into the fabric of pertinent Naval Education and Training curricula